



Department of  
**Education**

## PADDLING

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## PADDLING

**This document contains specific requirements related to paddling activities and must be read in conjunction with *Appendix A: General Requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures*.**

### 1. BACKGROUND

Schools conduct a range of paddling activities in a variety of contexts. The activities include basic level skill development in swimming pools or on calm water, through to advanced paddling skills on open waters, or on white water up to Grade 3. The skill development programs often culminate with day excursions or extended expeditions.

The information in this section contains guidelines for rafting, canoeing and kayaking activities, but may also inform teachers who use surf skis, stand-up paddle boards and other paddling craft (e.g. inflatable craft) as part of their teaching and learning programs.

Any person propelling a recreational canoe, kayak, surf ski, inflatable or similar craft by paddle must comply with *Department of Transport* marine laws.

### DEFINITIONS

#### ASSISTANT SUPERVISOR

Assists the Qualified Supervisor and or Department teacher-in-charge. May or may not have relevant qualification or experience.

#### CALM WATER

A still or slow moving water environment with no to low swell. These areas may include; a sheltered or protected coastal area or river, dam, waterhole or inland water body.

#### FIXED LOCATION

Within 200 metres of the initial launching point.

#### GROUP ONE PADDLE CRAFT

Water craft that are not intended for use with spray decks, do not conceal any part of a person's body and do not pose a potential hazard for entrapments allowing for the immediate exit of a person in the event of a capsized.

*This includes but is not limited to: Stand-Up Paddle Board; Single and Double Sit-on-Top Kayaks; Open Canoe; Inflatable Rafts; Single or double skis: Ocean Racing, Molokai, Spec, Long Plastic and Short Plastic.*

#### GROUP TWO PADDLE CRAFT

All water craft that conceals any part of a person's body, can be used with a spray deck and/or have the potential to cause body entrapments in the event of a capsized.

*This includes but is not limited to: single, double, triple, four-persons, and Multi-Sport Kayaks; Wild-Water, Guppy, Short Recreational, Slalom, Polo Bat, Play-boat, Freestyle, Creeker, and General White-Water Kayaks; Sea, Estuary, Short Plastic, Long Plastic and Touring Kayaks; Wild-Water, Slalom, C1, and C2 Canoes.*

**NON-FIXED LOCATION**

Any area beyond 200 metres from the initial launching point.

**OPEN WATER**

An uncontrolled and/or unprotected water environment that may be fast flowing or turbulent, such as a surf beach, flowing river or waterway, tidal coastal water, or areas affected by swell and/or strong currents.

**PADDLING**

The propulsion and steering of water based craft, by a person or persons, using a paddle with either single or double ended blade.

**SWIMMING POOL**

A controlled, indoor or outdoor, still water environment contained within an artificial structure, monitored for water quality.

**WHITE WATER**

A section of white water where the water current or tidal movement is sufficient to create hydrological features. Hydrological features may include but are not limited to rapids, eddies, whirlpools etc. See the [International River Grading System](#) guidance below to assist with the identification of white water.

<b>INTERNATIONAL RIVER GRADING SYSTEM</b>	
<b>Grade/ Class of White Water</b>	<b>Classification</b>
<b>1</b>	EASY: Slow to medium flowing water with very small, regular waves or riffles. Relatively few obstacles, with an easy path to find and follow. Suitable for novices.
<b>2</b>	MEDIUM: Rapids are straightforward with medium sized, regular waves. The path through the rapids can be easily seen from the water and is often indicated by well-defined chutes or V's of water. There are some obstacles that require manoeuvring around, but paddlers with a good command of basic strokes can easily miss them.
<b>3</b>	DIFFICULT: Rapids have moderate, irregular waves and strong currents. Manoeuvring is required to follow the preferred route. Small to medium sized stoppers may have to be negotiated. The route is difficult for inexperienced paddlers to see and scouting is advisable. Suitable for experienced white water paddlers, with the ability to roll an advantage.

**2. ENVIRONMENT**

The suitability of the location is determined after considering each student's capacity, skills and experience, the planned activities, and the supervision required.

When assessing the suitability of a location, access to resources, services and facilities also need to be considered (e.g. toilets, water, external communication and assistance).

Students must only be exposed to environments or locations that have been assessed and deemed appropriate by the Department teacher-in-charge for the students' capacity, skills and experience.

Research should be conducted around desired locations well in advance to confirm sites are suitable for the group size and competency levels.

Prevailing water and surf conditions in the selected area must be reappraised for suitability before students enter the water.

Water depth must be appropriate for the activity.

Paddling activities must not be conducted in strong tidal areas, on a lee-shore where there is no safe exit point (e.g. where there is wind blowing on-shore in rocky areas), where a river is in flood, or in known estuarine crocodile habitats.

The level of risk varies according to the nature and location of the activity.

If activities are in ocean or estuarine environments, checks must be made directly prior to the activity regarding shark sightings or alerts in the area of use. In the event of a shark sighting the activity may need to be postponed or modified. Prior to conducting the activity, the Department teacher-in-charge should access information regarding weather, coastal conditions and shark activity. Information is available from:

- SharkSmart website;
- Surf Life Saving WA (SLSWA) website; or
- SLSWA Twitter feed.

Up-to-date information regarding current shark sightings can be accessed from the following apps:

- Beachsafe
- SharkSmart WA

The activity must be cancelled immediately if a shark warning alert is sounded.

Sea kayaking must not be conducted beyond 5000m of a safe landing point.

It is recommended that wave ski activities are conducted at patrolled beaches. Wave ski areas should be determined in consultation with beach control authorities.

## **WEATHER CONSIDERATIONS**

Weather conditions need to be assessed and monitored in the days leading up to the activity, on the day of the activity and throughout the activity. The supervisory team may need to modify or cancel the activity at any time. Check the Bureau of Meteorology for up-to-date conditions and weather warnings.

### **Guidance**

*The qualified supervisor or Department teacher-in-charge must have first-hand knowledge of the location. Other sources of information may include:*

- *the venue manager;*
- *the local ranger or land manager;*
- *experienced paddlers with knowledge of the location;*
- *paddling clubs;*
- *books, guides, articles;*
- *a professional lifeguard;*
- *other schools that have conducted similar activities in that location;*
- *an external provider; and/or*
- *Outdoors WA.*

*Selected areas may be defined by the use of on shore marker buoys, flags, natural features or other nominated craft.*

For more information regarding weather:

- [Bureau of Meteorology](#);
- [Weatherzone](#);
- [Seabreeze](#); and
- [Swellnet](#)

### 3. CAPACITY OF STUDENTS

Prior to commencing any paddling activity, the Department teacher-in-charge must confirm that each student has the capacity and required swimming and water safety skills to participate safely.

Consideration should be given to students who come from cultural backgrounds where there may have been limited exposure to water-based activities.

Students in primary school may undertake paddling activities if the Department teacher-in-charge deems that each student has the physical capacity, skills and/or support to enable them to capably control the craft at the proposed location (see the *Guidance* section below).

The Department teacher-in-charge determines whether the students will need to develop additional skills to safely participate in all activities, particularly if an expedition is proposed. All qualification and supervision requirements in the relevant activity specific documents apply.

Students with an impairment may participate in paddling activities provided adequate safety and control measures are implemented. Specific consideration is given to:

- the type and level of disability;
- water supervision levels;
- suitable flotation devices, if required;
- curriculum adjustments so that the student can access the curriculum activity on the same basis as their peers;
- availability and suitability of the craft; and
- on-shore assistance and supervision.

Where spray decks are used, students should have specific practice and/or be experienced in their use, and demonstrate proficiency in capsize and exit drills.

Alternative or adjusted activities should be provided for students who do not have the capacity to participate.

Students who have a medical condition that may impact on their safety must be cleared by a medical practitioner before they can participate.

The Department teacher-in-charge and relevant supervisors must be aware of health care maintenance and/or any intensive health care needs of students, particularly allergic reactions to stings or bites in a marine environment. Protective equipment such as gloves and appropriate exposure suits should be considered for students who are susceptible.

A re-assessment of students' capacity is undertaken if any circumstances surrounding the activity change. This includes any change in the condition of the aquatic environment, their medical fitness, or their capacity to undertake the activity.

**Guidance**

*The Department's Swimming and Water Safety Continuum and the Safety Survival Sequence (refer to Swimming and Water Safety Activities document) within the Swimming Instructors Handbook and Guidelines and Royal Life Saving Swim and Survive Instructor Assessment Guide are useful resources for gauging students' swimming and water safety skills. They are only indicative of student skills at the time of assessment and their use does not guarantee students' safety, nor reduce a teacher's duty of care responsibilities.*

*Prior to engaging in paddling activities, students should be able to:*

- swim 200 metres in less than seven (7) minutes; and
- support themselves in water for a minimum of fifteen (15) minutes without the aid of a flotation device.

**Calm water - non-fixed locations**

*Where students are developing additional techniques and/or increasing their repertoire of skills as part of an Outdoor Education course, a formal assessment of basic paddling skills should be conducted.*

*Where the distance travelled from a calm water, non-fixed location is greater than 200m from the initial entry point, should also be able to:*

- keep their craft within 50 metres of the instructor at all times;
- swim under a craft with an approved Level 100 or 50 life jacket and surface on the other side;
- use and check equipment appropriately;
- select attire that is appropriate to various conditions;
- move their craft as required (e.g. basic craft manoeuvres such as pivoting, performing lateral, forwards and backwards movements, turning, carrying out support, bracing and emergency stops);
- perform basic paddling strokes;
- empty a craft;
- perform a self-rescue; and
- conduct a deep water assisted rescue.

**Open waters and white water**

*Before paddling on open waters, in addition to the skills expected for calm water non-fixed locations, students should also be able to:*

- perform basic paddling strokes including support bracing;
- perform basic manoeuvres, including emergency stops;
- conduct capsizes and broadside drills and procedures;
- conduct buddy gear checks; and
- carry out self, T or X rescues and other relevant safety practices.

*If a student's capacity has been compromised due to injury or illness, they may require re-assessment prior to re-engaging with paddling activities.*

**4. STUDENT HEALTH CARE**

Refer to *Appendix A: General Requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures* for further requirements.

**5. ACTIVITIES**

Activities conducted in aquatic environments generally require a high degree of risk analysis and management.

The full range of activities to be conducted as part of the paddling program should be assessed before making final decisions about the activities and areas to be used.

Work boundaries and procedures must be clearly defined prior to launching, to prevent craft becoming dispersed.

**Rafting**

White water rafting on Grade/Class 4 rapids or above is strictly prohibited.

There must be a strong educational benefit to include rafting in a teaching and learning program, for it to be deemed appropriate. Each student must demonstrate their proficiency in the grade of water in which the rafting activity will be undertaken. Students must also be proficient in a range of paddling activities, navigating and rescues in white waters in other craft as part of the sequential learning program.

**Paddling**

Where the distance travelled in calm water is greater than 200 metres from a safe landing point, the following parameters must be adhered to:

- there must be no more than twelve (12) craft for one instructor; and
- the group must stay within 2 km of a safe landing point.

For Open Water activities it is recommended that trips are planned to follow the natural coastline.

If a crossing is greater than 2 km (e.g. paddling from island to island), a safety or support craft must be present.

Skis should be water tight and be fitted with a spray deck where appropriate.

**Sea kayaking**

Sea kayaking must not be conducted beyond 5 km of a safe landing point.

If specific aspects of an extended coastal voyage (e.g. a sea trek) need to be clarified and the Department of Transport Marine should be contacted.

**Guidance**

*The qualified supervisor or Department teacher-in-charge should determine the additional skills required by students to safely participate in all activities that may be undertaken during the paddling program, particularly when on an expedition. Refer to the relevant activity specific documents for additional information on qualifications and supervision requirements that apply.*

*Time available and distances to be travelled are based on the slowest or least competent member of the group. Time should be allowed for portaging, lining, rest, mishaps and refreshment stops.*

*Hazards in flowing water including trees, logs, rocks, fences, rapids and other navigational hazards should be viewed and assessed before running them.*

*There should be only one craft on a rapid at any one time.*

**6. EQUIPMENT**

Prior to the activity, the Department teacher-in-charge should provide students with an equipment list that includes details about:

- suitable footwear (usually enclosed) for use in aquatic environments;
- protective clothing for environment (including sun safety) and potential weather conditions; and
- change of clothes and towel for use after the activity.

Students should be encouraged to wear brightly coloured, highly visible clothing that suits the activity weather conditions (e.g. brightly coloured thermal rash shirts).

Students should be protected from excessive exposure to sunlight increasing the risk of sunburn (e.g. using hats, protective clothing, sunblock and sun glasses).

Enclosed sandals or other appropriate footwear should be worn when swimming in water if visibility is limited and the bottom surface is unknown. All equipment must be checked to confirm that it is appropriate to the activity, safe and in working order.

Emergency equipment (including rescue and communication equipment) should be waterproofed wherever possible and stored/stowed in, or tied securely to, the craft. For information on safety, equipment rules and responsibilities the Department of Transport *Marine*.

Appropriate first aid equipment must be readily accessible. The first aid kit must include items that are appropriate for the activity, environment or location, size and needs of the group, and duration of the activity.

All participants must wear a life jacket at all times when within 3m of the water's edge. Life jackets approved for general use must bear the relevant

Standard or stamp (AS 4758) Level 50 or higher; when paddling:

- on calm and protected waters: Level 50 or higher must be worn; and
- in open and unprotected waters: Level 100 or higher must be worn.

For further information about lifejackets, refer to the Department of Transport *Marine*.

Whistles must be attached to lifejackets.

Inflatable lifejackets must be maintained and serviced regularly in accordance with the manufacturer's advice.

Hard shell helmets with drainage holes must be worn while paddling in water where there may be safety hazards (e.g. rapids, tea-tree sections and surf).

Where a safety or support power boat is required to accompany paddlers, the craft must comply with Department of Transport *Marine: Recreational Boating* or the *Marine Safety (Domestic Commercial Vessel) National Law Act 2012* requirements, whichever are appropriate.

All stand-up paddle boards, boats, recreational canoes or paddle craft, kayaks, surf skis and inflatables, must carry a compliant Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) or Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) if proceeding more than two nautical miles from the mainland shore or more than 400 metres from an island located more than two nautical miles from the mainland shore. A PLB should be attached to the person on the craft in case they become separated from the vessel. Please refer to the Department of Transport *Marine*.

For extended offshore voyages, consider travelling with another paddle craft or support craft and logging on and off with the local volunteer marine rescue group.

In case of emergency, appropriate communication equipment must be readily available. Mobile phones must be available for use in an emergency situation (with allowance made for the fact that they do not operate in all localities). Where there is no mobile phone coverage, MHz, MF/HF or VHF radios should be used. A satellite phone is an alternative option. Consideration should be given to carrying an EPIRB and/or the viability of participating in water based activities in locations where access to emergency services and communication is limited.



**Guidance**

*It is recommended that the Department teacher-in-charge takes or delegates responsibility to an appropriate supervisor for the group's first aid kit and communication devices.*

**All water paddling - non-fixed locations**

For all paddling activities in non-fixed locations the Department teacher-in-charge should confirm that the group carries the following items:

- a repair kit;
- spare paddle;
- throw bag;
- tow rope;
- first aid equipment;
- spare dry clothing;
- high energy food;
- rescue kit for moving water; and
- emergency communications equipment.

The rescue kit for all paddle activities, in all water environments, should include:

- a whistle
- a throw bag containing 15 metres of floating non-absorbent static rope that is 8-10 millimetres in diameter;
- two carabiners;
- two prussiks;
- a tape sling;
- 50cm of 25mm breathing tube - as a minimum;
- a life-saving ring or inflatable lifejacket;
- a sharp knife; and
- a rescue saw, if in white water.

All emergency gear should be stowed in, or tied securely to, the craft.

**Open water paddling activities**

The **lead supervisor's craft** must carry:

- safety equipment recommended by the Department of Transport;
- relevant communication devices (e.g. an in-date registered EPIRB or PLB when operating more than 2 km offshore, on extended or remote coastal tours, or if it is anticipated that the marine transceiver could be ineffective);
- an in-date inshore distress flare kit;
- two red hand-held flares, and two orange smoke flares;
- a first aid kit; and
- for trips beyond 2 km offshore: a marine radio or transceiver that is functional in the area of the activity and two parachute flares.

Beyond 400 metres from a safe landing point **all other paddle craft** must carry:

- two red hand-held flares or an in-date EPIRB/PLB;
- a bailer or pump (not applicable for group one craft except open canoes);
- one bilge pump for each group of six kayaks (if not self-draining - not applicable for group one craft except open canoes);
- spray decks to be worn in conditions where waves or surf may be encountered (not applicable for group one craft);
- a whistle for each participant;
- appropriate paddles for the craft;
- 15 metres of 7mm diameter buoyant, brightly coloured rope that can be attached to the kayak; and
- a supply of fresh water; the amount to be determined by the Department teacher-in-charge.

**Guidance**

For further information about specific water environments refer to:

- [Australian Adventure Activity Good Practice Guide: Enclosed and Coastal Waters Paddle-craft.](#)
- [Australian Adventure Activity Good Practice Guide: Inland Water Paddle-craft.](#)

All craft should be of:

- a suitable design and construction for the environmental conditions; and appropriate for the students' age, capacity and experience; and
- a design such that: emptying, using the correct technique, does not create an undue physical problem; and the crew and gear are supported when the craft is full of water.

Handholds should be securely fitted to the bow and stern of canoes and kayaks in such a way that a full hand cannot be inserted through the loop.

Paddle length should be appropriate to the size of the students.

Enclosed footwear should be worn where hazards are known or suspected.

Information about safety equipment, rules and regulations can be accessed through the Department of Transport, [Marine Safety.](#)

## 7. THE SUPERVISORY TEAM

Refer to *Appendix A: General Requirements* in the *Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures* for further requirements.

## 8. EXTERNAL PROVIDERS

Refer to *Appendix A: General Requirements* in the *Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures* for further requirements.

## 9. MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS AND COMPETENCIES

The Department teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team members possess skills in paddling, and have the appropriate experience, knowledge and skills to identify and manage potential risks at any stage during paddling activities.

*Recommended minimum qualifications and/or formal training accreditations:*

Different levels of supervision are required for canoeing, kayaking and sea kayaking activities in open and calm water locations; and for activities conducted from fixed and non-fixed locations.

**Guidance**

Further information and support can be found on the following websites:

- [Paddle WA](#)
- [Surf Life Saving WA](#)

The supervisory team must:

- be able to effect a rescue at the location;
- have documented evidence of current and relevant paddling experience, or instructional qualifications, or nationally recognised competencies (e.g. the *Australian Qualifications Framework*, Outdoor Recreation Industry Training Package competencies) gained from an education institution or nationally recognised training provider, or equivalent; and
- have a current aquatic rescue qualification and experience in performing rescues that are appropriate for paddling activities at the proposed location. Possession of a swift water rescue qualification, without paddling experience is not sufficient.

It is recommended that at least one member of the supervisory team holds a current, activity-specific qualification and/or have attained current, activity-specific competencies through a recognised tertiary institution or Registered Training Organisation (RTO); including:

- extensive, recently logged experience in conducting the specific activity; and
- a relevant *Instructor* or *Guide* qualification appropriate for the craft and level of the activity being undertaken, the location and environmental conditions; or
- an activity-specific, relevant, nationally agreed set of competencies registered through the National Outdoor Leader Registration Scheme (NOLRS).

At least one member of the supervisory team must hold the following:

<i>Environment</i>	<i>Supervisors must have:</i>	<i><u>AND</u> an aquatic rescue qualification</i>
<b>Calm water (fixed location)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recent logged experience and skills in the type of craft used at the location; or</li> <li>• Flat water skills set; or</li> <li>• An equivalent (or higher) award, as recognised by the Director General.</li> </ul>	<p>A relevant aquatic rescue for the intended environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skill set to effect deep water rescues for intended craft/s; and</li> <li>• RLSSA <i>Bronze Medallion</i>; or</li> <li>• SLSSA <i>Bronze Medallion</i>; or</li> <li>• RLSSA <i>School Teacher Aquatic Rescue Training</i> (START) certificate; or</li> <li>• Surf Life Saving WA (SLSWA) <i>Community Surf Rescue</i> certificate.</li> </ul>
<b>Calm water (non-fixed location)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recent logged experience and skills in the type of craft used at the location; and</li> <li>• Flat water guide qualification; or</li> <li>• An equivalent (or higher) award, as recognised by the Director General.</li> </ul>	<p>A relevant aquatic rescue for the intended environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skill set to effect deep water rescues for intended craft/s; and</li> <li>• RLSSA <i>Bronze Medallion</i>; or</li> <li>• SLSSA <i>Bronze Medallion</i>; or</li> <li>• RLSSA <i>School Teacher Aquatic Rescue Training</i> (START) certificate; or</li> <li>• Surf Life Saving WA (SLSWA) <i>Community Surf Rescue</i> certificate.</li> </ul>
<b>Open water: Group one craft</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recent logged experience and skills in the type of craft used at the location; and</li> <li>• Coastal guide qualification; or</li> <li>• Sea skills qualification or higher; or</li> <li>• Flat water guide qualification, with moving water endorsement; or</li> <li>• An equivalent (or higher) award, as recognised by the Director General.</li> </ul>	<p>A relevant aquatic rescue for the intended environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skill set to effect deep water rescues for intended craft/s; and</li> <li>• RLSSA <i>Bronze Medallion</i>; or</li> <li>• SLSSA <i>Bronze Medallion</i>; or</li> <li>• RLSSA <i>School Teacher Aquatic Rescue Training</i> (START) certificate; or</li> <li>• Surf Life Saving WA (SLSWA) <i>Community Surf Rescue</i> certificate.</li> </ul>
<b>Open water - (within 200m fixed location): Group two craft</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recent logged experience and skills in the type of craft used at the location; and</li> <li>• Flat water guide qualification with moving water endorsement; or</li> <li>• An equivalent (or higher) award, as recognised by the Director General.</li> </ul>	<p>A relevant aquatic rescue for the intended environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skill set to effect deep water rescues for intended craft/s; and</li> <li>• SLSSA <i>Bronze Medallion</i>; or</li> <li>• RLSSA <i>School Teacher Aquatic Rescue Training</i> (START) certificate; or</li> <li>• Surf Life Saving WA (SLSWA) <i>Community Surf Rescue</i> certificate.</li> </ul>

<i>Environment</i>	<i>Supervisors must have:</i>	<i><u>AND</u> an aquatic rescue qualification</i>
<b>White water (up to and including Grade 2 rapids): Group two craft</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recent logged experience and skills in the type of craft used at the location; and</li> <li>• White water guide qualification; or</li> <li>• Flat water guide with moving water endorsement; or</li> <li>• An equivalent (or higher) award, as recognised by the Director General.</li> </ul>	<p>A relevant aquatic rescue for the intended environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skill set to effect deep water rescues for intended craft/s; and</li> <li>• Paddle Australia <i>White Water Rescue 1</i> (or higher) award; or</li> <li>• SLSA <i>Bronze Medallion</i>; or</li> <li>• RLSSA <i>School Teacher Aquatic Rescue Training</i> (START) certificate; or</li> <li>• <i>Swift Water Rescue</i> (or higher) award (comprising 3 units of competency).</li> </ul>
<b>Open water (within 1000m safe landing point): Group two craft</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recent logged experience and skills in the type of craft used at the location; and</li> <li>• Enclosed Sea Guide qualification; or</li> <li>• An equivalent (or higher) award, as recognised by the Director General.</li> </ul>	
<b>Open water (locations greater than 1000m and less than 5000m from a safe landing point): Group two craft</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recent logged experience and skills in the type of craft used at the location; and</li> <li>• Sea Guide qualification; or</li> <li>• An equivalent (or higher) award, as recognised by the Director General.</li> </ul>	

It is recommended that supervisors maintain evidence of their currency and experience through the use of a logbook, or similar.

When venturing beyond 200 metres in open water, there must be at least two experienced supervisors at all times. One of these supervisors must be a qualified supervisor who leads the activity; the other experienced (or qualified) supervisor assists.

#### *Safety or support craft*

The supervisor in control of the safety or support power craft must:

- demonstrate skills in handling the craft being used; and
- have recent and logged experience in performing rescue and retrieving a paddle craft; and
- hold a *Recreational Skipper's Ticket (RST)*; and/or have at least one of the following:
  - be a qualified and experienced *Safety Boat Operator*;
  - hold an Australian Sailing (AS) *Power Boat Handling (PBH)*; or
  - hold a relevant commercial ticket.

The Department teacher-in-charge must be satisfied that the supervisor operating a safety or support craft has recent logged experience in providing relevant support and effecting a rescue for the activity and location.

*Skills and experience*

The Department teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team:

- has experience in the activity at the level being offered to students;
- has the relevant qualifications;
- has current CPR qualifications; and
- understands the emergency responses and supervision responsibilities.

It is recommended that all members of the supervisory team have recent and (preferably) logged experience in paddling activities, are able to demonstrate paddling skills in the type of craft being used at the location, and have knowledge about:

- paddling techniques;
- specific paddle craft instruction;
- specific local weather patterns;
- emergency response procedures;
- land and/or marine weather forecasts for the duration of the activity;
- rescue techniques; and
- group management.

As water conditions can alter suddenly, members of the supervisory team conducting kayaking activities in an ocean environment should also have experience and knowledge of:

- sea kayak instruction;
- rescue techniques;
- the location of other possible boat traffic, particularly shipping lanes;
- coastal navigation techniques, including using coastal charts and marine navigation markers;
- use of tide charts and knowledge of local tide conditions;
- boating regulations; and
- local surf zones, rips and current, including surf types and patterns if surf is likely to be encountered.

**Guidance*****Records of qualifications***

*A record of staff swimming and water safety qualifications should be maintained by the school. The date of issue of the qualification and formal notification of any subsequent renewal or upgrade should be included.*

## 10. MINIMUM LEVELS OF SUPERVISION

The Department teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team members possess skills in the relevant water based activities and have the appropriate experience, knowledge and skills to identify and manage potential risks at any stage during water based activities.

The level of risk in aquatic environments is dynamic and must be constantly monitored.

The appropriate number of supervisors directly monitoring students in the water must be maintained at all times.

Different levels of supervision are required for group one craft and group two craft activities conducted in open and calm water environments, in fixed and non-fixed locations.

Group sizes and supervision levels are determined after considering the:

- purpose of the activity;
- type of craft to be used;
- age, capacity, experience and skills of each student;
- qualifications, capacity and experience of the supervisor(s);
- types of activities to be undertaken;
- students' medical conditions or disabilities; and
- nature of the environment.

For extended offshore voyages, consider travelling with another paddle craft or support craft and logging on and off with the local volunteer marine rescue group.

The level of supervision, maximum numbers of students and craft type varies depending on the distance from a safe landing point.

A second supervisor is not required for all aquatic environments, provided that there are clear systems in place so that supervisors can quickly summon assistance if required.

Greater supervision must be provided for beginners, primary aged or less able students.

Students must be within the qualified supervisors line of sight at all times. If activity goes outside of line of sight a second supervisor is required to maintain adequate supervision.

### **Guidance**

*The qualified supervisor is responsible for the decision for participants to self-guide a river section. If self-guided, each student must be deemed competent to the level considered reasonable for the river section by the qualified supervisor.*

**GROUP ONE PADDLE CRAFT****ALL WATER ENVIRONMENTS AND ALL PADDLE CRAFT**

Kindergarten - Year 3

Paddle Activities are not recommended for students in Kindergarten - Year 3.

**SWIMMING POOL**

Year 4 - 6

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one qualified supervisor for every 24 students or part thereof;
- one supervisor for every 12 students or part thereof (including the qualified supervisor);  
and
- a maximum of eight craft per supervisor.

Year 7 - 12

Recommended two supervisors at all times:

- one qualified supervisor for every 24 students or part thereof; and
- it is recommended a maximum of 12 craft per supervisor.

**CALM WATER - FIXED LOCATION (WITHIN 200M OF INITIAL LAUNCHING POINT)**

Year 4 - 6

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one qualified supervisor for every 24 students or part thereof;
- one supervisor for every 12 students or part thereof (including the qualified supervisor);  
and
- a maximum of eight craft per supervisor.

Year 7 - 12

Recommended two supervisors at all times:

- one qualified supervisor for every 24 students or part thereof; and
- it is recommended a maximum of 12 craft per supervisor.

**CALM WATER - NON-FIXED LOCATION**

Year 4 - 6

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one qualified supervisor for every 16 students or part thereof;
- one supervisor for every eight students or part thereof (including the qualified supervisor);  
and
- a maximum of six craft per supervisor.

Year 7 - 12

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one qualified supervisor for every 24 students or part thereof;
- one supervisor for every 16 students or part thereof (including the qualified supervisor);  
and
- a maximum of 12 craft per supervisor.

OPEN WATER AND WHITE WATER UP TO GRADE 2 RAPIDS (0 - 200M FROM A SAFE LANDING POINT)

Years 4 - 6

This activity is not recommended for students in Kindergarten - Year 6.

Year 7 - 12

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one qualified supervisor for every 16 students or part thereof;
- one supervisor for every 12 students or part thereof (including the qualified supervisor);  
and
- a maximum of eight craft per supervisor.

OPEN WATER: 200M - 1000M SAFE LANDING POINT

Kindergarten - Year 9

This activity is not recommended for students in Kindergarten - Year 9.

Years 10 - 12

There must be two qualified supervisors at all times:

- one qualified supervisor for every 16 students or part thereof;
- one supervisor for every eight students or part thereof (including the qualified supervisor);  
and
- a maximum of six craft per supervisor.

OPEN WATER: 1000M - 5000M SAFE LANDING POINT

Kindergarten - Year 10

This activity is not recommended for students in Kindergarten - Year 10.

Years 11 and 12

There must be two qualified supervisors at all times:

- one qualified supervisor for every four students or part thereof; and
- a maximum of four craft per supervisor.



The table below illustrates the supervision requirements for common group sizes. Groups at all times must remain within the prescribed supervision ratios and any limits set out earlier in this document.

### GROUP ONE PADDLE CRAFT

<i>Year level</i>	<i>Environment</i>	<i>Number of students</i>	<i>Qualified supervisor</i>	<i>Experienced assistant supervisor</i>	<i>Total supervisory team</i>
<b>K - 3</b>	<b>All water environments</b>	Paddle activities not recommended for K - 3			
<b>4 - 6</b>	<b>Swimming pool</b>	1 - 24	1	1	2
	<b>Calm water- fixed location (0 - 200m)</b>	1 - 24	1	1	2
	<b>Calm water- non-fixed location</b>	1 - 16	1	1	2
	<b>Open water</b>	Open water paddle activities not recommended for K - 6			
<b>7 - 12</b>	<b>Swimming pool</b>	1 - 24	1	0	1
	<b>Calm water- fixed location (0 - 200m)</b>	1 - 24	1	0	1
	<b>Calm water- non-fixed location</b>	1 - 24	1	1	2
		25 - 32	2	0	2
	<b>Open water - fixed location (0 - 200m) and White Water - up to grade 2 rapids.</b>	1 - 16	1	1	2
17 - 24		2	0	2	
<b>7 - 9</b>	<b>Open water - 200m - 1000m from a safe landing point</b>	This activity is not recommended for K - 9			
<b>10 -12</b>	<b>Open water - 200m - 1000m from a safe landing point</b>	1 - 16	1	1	2
		17 - 24	2	1	3
<b>7 - 10</b>	<b>Open water - 1000m - 5000m from a safe landing point</b>	This activity is not recommended for K - 10			
<b>11 - 12</b>	<b>Open water - 1000m - 5000m from a safe landing point</b>	1 - 8	2	0	2
		9 - 12	3	0	3
		13 - 16	4	0	4

**GROUP TWO PADDLE CRAFT****ALL WATER ENVIRONMENTS AND ALL PADDLE CRAFT**

Kindergarten - Year 3

Paddle Activities are not recommended for students in Kindergarten - Year 3.

**SWIMMING POOL**

Year 4 - 6

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one qualified supervisor for every 24 students or part thereof;
- one supervisor for every eight students or part thereof (including the qualified supervisor);  
and
- a maximum of eight craft per supervisor.

Year 7 - 12

Recommended two supervisors at all times:

- one qualified supervisor for every 24 students or part thereof; and
- a maximum of 12 craft per supervisor.

**CALM WATER - FIXED LOCATION**

Year 4 - 6

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one qualified supervisor for every 16 students or part thereof;
- one supervisor for every eight students or part thereof (including the qualified supervisor);  
and
- a maximum of eight craft per supervisor.

Year 7 - 12

Recommended two supervisors at all times:

- one qualified supervisor for every 22 students or part thereof; and
- a maximum of 12 craft per supervisor.

**CALM WATER - NON-FIXED LOCATION**

Year 4 - 6

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one qualified supervisor for every 16 students or part thereof;
- one supervisor for every eight students or part thereof (including the qualified supervisor);  
and
- a maximum of six craft per supervisor.

Year 7 - 12

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one qualified supervisor for every 16 students or part thereof;
- one supervisor for every 16 students or part thereof (including the qualified supervisor);  
and
- a maximum of 12 craft per supervisor.

OPEN WATER AND GRADE 2 RAPIDS: 0 - 200M SAFE LANDING POINT

Kindergarten - Year 6

This activity is not recommended for students in Kindergarten - Year 6.

Year 7 - 12

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one qualified supervisor for every 16 students or part thereof;
- one supervisor for every eight students or part thereof (including the qualified supervisor);  
and
- a maximum of eight craft per supervisor.

OPEN WATER: 200M - 1000M SAFE LANDING POINT

Kindergarten - Year 9

This activity is not recommended for students in Kindergarten - Year 9.

Year 10 - 12

There must be two qualified supervisors at all times:

- one qualified supervisor for every eight students or part thereof;
- one supervisor for every eight students or part thereof (including the qualified supervisor);  
and
- a maximum of six craft per supervisor.

OPEN WATER: 1000M - 5000M SAFE LANDING POINT

Kindergarten - Year 10

This activity is not recommended for students in Kindergarten - Year 10.

Year 11 and 12

There must be two qualified supervisors at all times:

- one qualified supervisor for every four students or part thereof; and
- a maximum of four craft per supervisor.

The table below illustrates the supervision requirements for common group sizes. Groups at all times must remain within the prescribed supervision ratios and any limits set out earlier in this document.

### GROUP TWO PADDLE CRAFT

<i>Year level</i>	<i>Environment</i>	<i>Number of students</i>	<i>Qualified supervisor</i>	<i>Experienced assistant supervisor</i>	<i>Total supervisory team</i>
<b>K - 3</b>	<b>All water environments</b>	Paddle Activities not recommended for K - 3			
<b>4 - 6</b>	<b>Swimming pool</b>	1 - 16	1	1	2
		17 - 24	1	2	3
		25 - 32	2	2	4
	<b>Calm water- fixed location (0 - 200m)</b>	1 - 16	1	1	2
		17 - 24	2	1	3
		25 - 32	2	2	4
	<b>Calm water- non-fixed location</b>	1 - 16	1	1	2
		17 - 24	2	1	3
		25 - 32	2	2	4
	<b>Open water</b>	Open water paddle activities not recommended for K - 6			
<b>7 - 12</b>	<b>Swimming pool</b>	1 - 24	1	0	1
		Larger groups are not recommended			
	<b>Calm water- fixed location (0 - 200m)</b>	1 - 22	1	0	1
	<b>Calm water- non-fixed location</b>	1 - 16	1	1	2
		17 - 32	2	0	2
	<b>Open water and Grade 2 rapids fixed location (0 - 200m)</b>	1 - 16	1	1	2
		17 - 24	2	1	3
25 - 32	2	2	4		
<b>K - 9</b>	<b>Open water - 200m - 1000m from a safe landing point</b>	This activity is not recommended for K - 9			
<b>10 - 12</b>	<b>Open water - 200m - 1000m from a safe landing point</b>	1 - 8	1	1	2
		9 - 16	2	0	2
		17 - 24	3	0	3
		25 - 32	4	0	4
<b>K - 10</b>	<b>Open water - 1000m - 5000m from a safe landing point</b>	This activity is not recommended for K - 10			
<b>11 - 12</b>	<b>Open water - 1000m - 5000m from a safe landing point</b>	1 - 8	2	0	2
		9 - 12	3	0	3
		13 - 16	4	0	4

## 11. SUPERVISION STRATEGIES

Supervision strategies must:

- confirm that the safety and well-being of students is maintained at all times;
- reflect risks associated with proximity to water;
- address circumstances when students are not in clear view of the supervisors; and
- include students who are not actively participating in the activity.

The appropriate number of supervisors directly monitoring students in the water must be maintained at all times.

All participants must conduct appropriate safety checks prior to commencing the activity, and at critical times throughout.

Direct communication must be maintained with students at all times.

Larger groups may need to be separated into pods of smaller sizes. Each pod should have the appropriate supervisory requirements, safety, first aid and communication equipment.

Canoes and kayaks should travel in pods with a maximum diameter spread of 100 metres on rivers, or 200 metres on the sea.

Supervisors are to monitor students continuously for signs of fatigue or exhaustion.

If other schools or groups are using the same venue, potential risks must be identified, and supervisory strategies put in place to deal with the nature and number of those groups, and any risks that might arise from that situation.

### **Guidance**

*For paddling trips, a lead craft is designated whose occupant/s are aware of the planned route and can direct the group to scheduled stops.*

*A tail craft is also designated.*

*Buddy practices are established so that students can monitor and check the safety and wellbeing of their partner or buddy canoe. See Swimming and Water Based Activities.*

*It is recommended that:*

- *rules are established to confirm that all students remain in close proximity to the supervisors;*
- *a supervisor with a current first aid qualification travels at the rear of the group;*
- *a buddy system is established so that students can monitor and check the safety and wellbeing of their partner; and*
- *a regular head count of all participants is conducted.*

### **Safety or support craft**

A safety or support craft must accompany craft travelling beyond 2km off shore. The craft must comply with Department of Transport Marine requirements.

A safety tether lanyard must be worn by the safety or support powerboat driver at all times.

Supervisors must exercise particular caution when students are entering, boarding and/or snorkelling near the propellers of a vessel. A propeller guard is recommended.

Propeller aware strategies must be used whenever a person is in the water.

## 12. IDENTIFICATION OF PARTICIPANTS

Systems for identifying students may include:

- the wearing of lifesaver or swimming caps, neoprene armbands or rash shirts, school t shirts, vests, bibs, sashes; and
- confining students to designated areas not being utilised by other schools or members of the public.

Refer to *Appendix A: General Requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures* for further requirements.

## 13. COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Refer to *Appendix A: General Requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools* for further requirements.

## 14. RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

Refer to *Appendix A: General Requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools* for further requirements.

## 15. EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

Refer to *Appendix A: General Requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures* for further requirements.

## 16. BRIEFING STUDENTS AND SUPERVISORS

The Department teacher-in-charge must confirm that all participants are briefed about:

- the educational purpose and the cooperative nature of the activity;
- the activity itinerary;
- required skills appropriate to the activity;
- participants' roles and responsibilities, including standards of acceptable behaviour and activity rules;
- the role and location of supervisors;
- the system for identifying students and supervisors;
- food and water requirements;
- procedures that will be followed if members of the party are overdue, or become lost or separated from the group;
- potential hazards and safety procedures appropriate to the activity and venue;
- buddy practices and lost buddy procedures;
- areas demarcated and identified specifically for student groups;
- conditions associated with hypothermia, sunburn and dehydration;
- communication strategies that will be used throughout the activity, including a signal to gain the attention of the whole group; and a signal to be used if assistance is required;
- "righting" drill procedures, including the importance of staying with the craft;
- emergency and evacuation procedures, signals and location of emergency equipment;
- appropriate clothing for the activity and weather conditions, including thermal and sun protection;
- minimal impact principles for that location (see *Leave No Trace* principles);
- aspects of the environment and expected weather conditions;
- how to identify currents, tides, reefs and other potential hazards of the venue, including safe entry and exit points; and
- the route to be followed including pre-determined stops and/or meeting points along the way (if applicable).

Special information sessions must be arranged for students who were absent from preparatory briefings.

### **Guidance**

*Changing environmental conditions encountered during the paddling activities may necessitate the need to brief students while in transit.*

*Paddle activities in the surf, open water and white water environments require a rigorous emergency response plan which gives consideration to the:*

- *size, age and previous activity experience of participants;*
- *skills and experience of the supervising staff;*
- *prevailing and forecast weather conditions;*
- *availability of a safety or support craft (power boat) and/or emergency vehicle) in the event of an emergency; and*
- *the nature of the location.*

## 17. INFORMED CONSENT

Refer to *Appendix A: General Requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures* for further requirements.